



News for Immediate Release

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State To Ensure That Levees Will Be Fixed

Pressure Will Be Kept on Federal Government for Levee Repair

DWR Director Lester Snow to hold Media Availability Conference Call,
3:00 p.m. TODAY, 916-651-7893

Sacramento – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today reconfirmed the state's commitment to repair critical levees and keep Californians safe as new levee erosion sites were identified. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) announced that 300 Sacramento River flood control system levee sites have been evaluated following this year's winter storms and 81 of those locations are considered severely damaged.

“We will continue to work with the federal government to ensure that California is protected,” said DWR Director Lester Snow. “These repairs are a federal responsibility and we urge the federal government to restore our damaged flood protection systems just as it is doing in Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states.”

Under Governor Schwarzenegger's leadership, California is prepared to deal with such erosion sites with \$500 million for levee repairs in the recent budget and by placing the bipartisan \$ 4.09 billion Proposition 1E on the November ballot. DWR will continue to work with the Corps to prioritize sites most in need of repair. In some cases, the state may advance money to the Corps for construction work until federal funding becomes available. DWR may also do some of the work under the authority of the existing state of emergency declared by the Governor in February.

Field inspections conducted in June by the Corps, DWR, and local agency officials found an unexpectedly high amount of damage to the Sacramento River levee system. The initial estimate to repair the 81 most severely damaged sites is \$160 million.

In the past, the federal government has taken the lead and repaired levee damage from flood events to their pre-flood conditions using principally federal funds. While the Corps has stated they will be requesting approval to perform the repairs on at least the highest priority levee sites, the Corps has also indicated that obtaining the necessary funds and

accomplishing major portions of the repairs this year will be very challenging.

The high level of damage from this year's storms, generally considered to be only about a 10-year flood event, demonstrates the aging and fragile nature of the flood control system. Additional damage is expected to be reported from field damage surveys from the San Joaquin Valley associated with the April 2006 flood event, and from the Corps' annual survey of bank erosion in the Sacramento Valley. These surveys are expected to be completed within the next two weeks.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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